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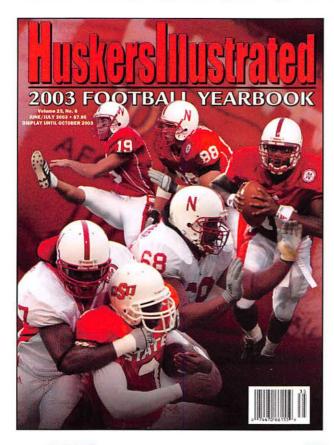
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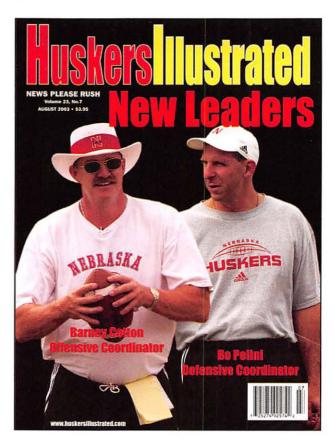


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... All The Time

FROM THE EDITOR

Starting With Defense

Blackshirts are up to the challenge in season-opening victory



Brian HILL tivities.

STATE CAPTAINS tried to work their way onto the field for the coin toss, they encountered part of the mass of 800 former players and coaches who were circling the field as part of the pregame fes-

THE OKLAHOMA

In the second half of Nebraska's 17-7 season-opening victory, the Cowboys may have felt like they were trying to move the football against the whole Husker Nation.

When Oklahoma State drove 52 yards in nine plays to score on its opening pos-

session and take a 7-3 lead, many of the Husker faithful may have had flashbacks to 2002 and thought "here we go again."

But that would be the only points the Blackshirts allowed in an inspired effort against the confident Cowboys and their high-powered offense.

"The thing that really made me proud is, you get hit in the face like that and

no one panicked, everybody responded like I thought they would," defensive coordinator Bo Pelini said. "They kept their calm. They were cool, and they kept playing hard."

The Oklahoma State touchdown came on a 4-yard pass from Josh Fields to Rashaun Woods, two of the main culprits in last year's 24-21 OSU win in Stillwater. Woods caught 11 passes for 134 yards, and Fields passed for 192 yards in that game. This time the All-America receiver finished with five catches for 47 yards, and Fields had 97

ON THE COVER

Middle linebacker Barrett Ruud celebrates after returning a fumble 15 yards for Nebraska's first touchdown in a 17-7 season-opening victory. Photo by Scott Bruhn.

yards passing and was intercepted three times.

Tailback Tatum Bell, who riddled the Huskers for 182 yards last year, finished with 87 yards rushing this time and lost a fumble that NU middle linebacker Barrett Ruud scooped up and scored what proved to be the winning touchdown.

That was one of five turnovers (three interceptions and two fumble recoveries) caused by the Nebraska defense, which had just 21 takeaways (13 interceptions and eight fumble recoveries) all last season.

"First of all, hats off to Frank Solich and Nebraska," Oklahoma State Coach

Les Miles said. "They did a great job bringing a new staff together and performing like the way they did today. Their defense had a nice game plan against our offense, and when you turn the ball over five times, it doesn't make any difference who you are playing; you will have a difficult time winning the football game."

You can read much, much more about the sea-

son-opener in this edition of Huskers Illustrated. Our feature story takes a look at Nebraska's punting game and senior Josh Larson. The subject of this week's profile is junior guard Jake Andersen, one of eight first-time starters against Oklahoma State.

Six of those new starters were on the offense, which battled mistakes and penalties at inopportune times. The Huskers did, however, control the ball, finishing with a 13-minute advantage in time of possession. That allowed the defense to stay fresh for its outstanding effort the first time out.

Pelini wanted to emphasize that there was a lot of room for improvement.

"We're going to keep setting the bar higher," he said. "If we do that, great things are going to happen."



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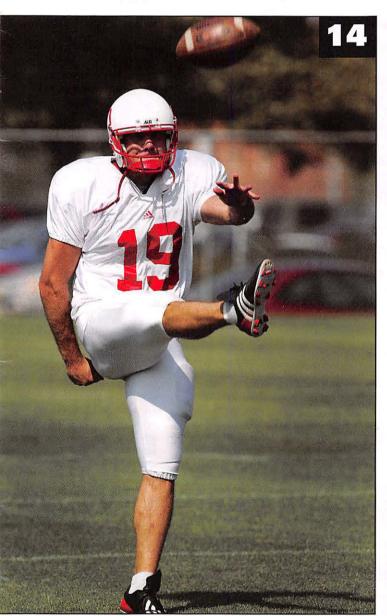
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Nebraska senior Kyle Larson understands the key to punting is replication. And the key to replication is repetition. By Mike Babcock

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Nотевоок

Mutual Respect

Trevor Johnson was jogging before practice when Dave Gillespie, assistant athletic director for football, called him over. The captains were going to be announced, Gillespie told him.

"Do you need me to be there for that?" Johnson wanted to know.

"It's kind of important that you be there," Gillespie said.

Johnson suspected then he might be one of the captains. So he wasn't completely surprised when Coach Frank Solich called his name in introducing them.

That didn't diminish the emotion, however.

"For me, it means everything," Johnson says. "When I was a little kid, and I say this about everything, but when I was growing up, I loved Nebraska football, cared about it more than anything."

Johnson grew up in Nebraska, as did Judd Davies. Jammal Lord is from Bayonne, N.J., and Demorrio Williams is from Beckville, Texas, by way of Kilgore, Texas, Junior College.

Williams is the first junior college transfer to be elected a Cornhusker captain at least since the late 1950s and possibly ever. "I think it says a lot for Demorrio," Solich said in announcing the captains. "It was no surprise to me that he gathered the votes that he did to be elected captain."

As with the others, Williams has a "great, great work ethic," said Solich.

He also might be the most vocal of the captains, after being one of the most reserved players a year ago. He was hesitant to speak up because a newcomer "doesn't know anything about the program," Williams says. "So I just kind of got back out of the way, just sat back and watched."

Now, however, he lets his feelings be known. "Like the coaches said, when you're out there playing, making plays, you should have the right to say something," he said. "So as the spring (practice) came this year, I said, 'Hey, man, this is it for you. You can't let this year pass you by."

Davies considers himself a vocal leader, too. "I'd definitely say so," he says.

The big fullback is no "big yeller," though.

"I probably won't throw things around and break stuff in the locker room. I've never been one who's been motivated by hate or motivated by,



Nebraska's 2003 captains are quarterback Jammal Lord (5), fullback Judd Davies (4), defensive end Trevor Johnson (88) and linebacker Demorrio Williams (7).

necessarily, aggression," says Davies. "What gets me on game day is where we've come from and how much we've been through together.

"That's the stuff I'll try to stress to the guys."

Lord has gone through as much as anyone, serving as a lightning rod for much of the criticism resulting from last season's frustrations. "He was the one that had to take the brunt of the aggression of the media, (from) everybody outside of the program," Davies says.

"But none of that stuff was coming from inside the program, and there was never a time last year where I'd blame him or use him as a scapegoat, or anybody on the offense. You've got to have good support to get things done as a quarterback or you won't be productive."

That's why Lord's rushing for a quarterback school-record 1,412 yards was so remarkable. "He was able to put up those stats without getting a tremendous amount of help," says Davies.

"We respect who he is and what he represents."

Lord says he is "appreciative" of the honor of being elected captain, but "it wouldn't have mattered if I was a captain or not" because there would be plenty of leadership, anyway. Among the seniors, "everybody's a leader, everybody's a captain, if it was me or anybody, see?"

What being chosen means to him is, "your teammates have your back," he says.

Being elected captain isn't a popularity contest, according to Davies.

"When I've voted in years past, I've never thought about who I liked or who I didn't like, who I thought, necessarily, was the best player or anything like that," he says.

"I always chose a captain by a guy I looked up to. When I saw him practice, I knew that he cared about what was going on on the field. He cared about more than just his personal performance, and he cared about how he presented himself to the rest of the team. That's how I voted."

Johnson, whom Lord describes as a "silent assassin," wasn't surprised by Lord's election. "I didn't really have any doubts he wouldn't be a captain," Johnson says.

When the voting results were revealed, he was as happy about Lord's name being called as he was about his own. "He did have a lot of crap thrown his way last year, a lot of undeserved crap also, so anything that happens good with him makes me feel good also," says Johnson.

"I care a lot about Jammal. I want everything to go real well for him."

And by extension, for the team.

NO PLACE LIKE HOME

The Nebraska men's basketball team won't be accumulating any frequent-flyer miles during the non-conference season. Nine of the Cornhuskers' 11 non-conference games will be played at the Bob Devaney Sports Center, and one of the other two is at Creighton.

The only non-conference game outside the state is at Minnesota on Dec. 29. The schedule, described by Coach Barry Collier as "highly competitive," includes non-conference home games against high-profile non-conference opponents Arizona State and Tennessee.

Nebraska opens the season against Fairleigh Dickinson on Nov. 22, after a pair of exhibition games. The Cornhuskers begin Big 12 Conference play at lowa State on Jan. 10.

ABC is slated to televise the Feb. 15 game against Kansas at the Sports Center.

Nov. 10 — Alaska-Fairbanks (exhibition); 14 — Athletes in Action (exhibition); 22 — Fairleigh Dickinson; 29 — Eastern Michigan

Dec. 3 — Arizona State; 6 — South Florida; 10 — at Creighton; 13 — Tennessee; 20 — Bethune-Cookman; 22 — Lipscomb; 29 — at Minnesota

Jan. 6 — St. Francis (Pa.); 10 — at Iowa State; 14 — Colorado; 17 — at Texas; 21 — Baylor; 24 — at Missouri

Baylor; 24 — at Missouri Feb. 1 — Oklahoma; 4 — at Kansas State; 7 — Missouri; 11 — at Texas A&M; 15 — Kansas; 18 — Kansas State; 21 — at Oklahoma State; 24 — Texas Tech; 28 — Iowa State

March 3 — at Kansas; 6 — at Colorado; 11-14 — at Big 12 Tournament, Dallas

NATIONAL EXPOSURE

Coach Connie Yori's Husker women's basketball team will make two national television appearances on Fox Sports Net, against NCAA Tournament qualifier Kansas State at the Bob Devaney Sports Center on Jan. 24 and against Iowa State at Ames, Iowa, on Feb. 21.

Yori's second Nebraska team is set to begin practice on Oct. 18, with the first of two exhibition games on Nov. 9 before opening the season against Wofford on Nov. 21. The Husker women, like the men, spend most of the non-conference season at home. In addition to playing in the Lady Tiger Thanksgiving Classic at Memphis, their only non-conference road games are at Washington State and Rice.

They are scheduled to open conference play at Oklahoma on Jan. 7.

Nov. 9 — Nebraska-Omaha (exhibition); 13 — Nebraska-Kearney (exhibition); 21 — Wofford; 23 — Princeton; 28-29 — at Lady Tiger Thanksgiving Classic (Eastern Kentucky, Mississippi, Memphis)

Dec. 4 — at Washington State; 6 — Texas-Arlington; 12 — Ohio State; 14 — Louisiana-Lafayette; 21 — Creighton; 30 — at Rice

Jan. 3 — St. Bonaventure; 7 — at Oklahoma; 10 — Iowa State; 14 — at Missouri; 17 — Texas A&M; 21 — at Texas Tech; 24 — Kansas State; 28 — Texas; 31 — at Baylor

Feb. 4 — at Colorado; 7 — Kansas; 11 — Oklahoma State; 14 — at Kansas State; 21 — at Iowa State; 25 — Missouri; 28 — at

March 3 — Colorado; 9-13 — at Big 12 Tournament, Dallas ■

Quick Hits

What's Happening In Nebraska Athletics?

BITTERSWEET GRADUATION

Jammal Lord was among four senior football players who received degrees during graduation ceremonies at the Bob Devaney Sports Center on Aug. 16. Lord considered delaying his graduation until December so that his mom could be present. Because of the massive power failure on the East Coast, Claudia Lord was unable to get a flight from New Jersey to see her son receive his degree.

The problem appeared to have been solved, so Lord went ahead as planned. But his mom's substitute flight also was canceled, and she couldn't make the trip. After the Cornhuskers' first major scrimmage of preseason practice, Lord was asked if the graduation experience had been bittersweet.

"You could say that," he replied.

In addition to Lord, Chad Buller, Jerrell Pippens and Pat Ricketts participated in the ceremonies. Lord and Pippens earned degrees in communications, Buller and Ricketts in business administration.

The scrimmage later that day was conducted despite temperatures near 100 degrees. Lord dismissed the heat, however, noting that any kind of weather, hot or cold, is football weather. Besides, he added, it might have been hotter in the Sports Center, "with all that graduation stuff on."

STICKING WITH IT

In addition to the four current football players, five former football players were among the 19 Cornhusker student-athletes receiving degrees at the summer graduation: Matt Behrends, Rob Blomeier, Eugene Chealey, Mike Demps and Ray Valladao. Chealey and Valladao both earned letters in the late 1980s, returning to finish with assistance through the NCAA's degree completion program.

The other student-athletes who received degrees at summer's end were: Jennifer Baccarani (tennis), Amber Burgess (softball), Bree Dority O'Callaghan (gymnastics), Margaret Richards (basketball), Justin Seely (baseball), Jelena Stanisavljevic (track and field), Jamie Stevens (swimming), Fungai Tongoona (tennis), Lisa Wangler (softball) and Chad Wiles (baseball).



DeAntae Grixby

HARD-LUCK SENIOR

If not for bad luck, DeAntae Grixby would have no luck at all when it comes to staying healthy. The senior fullback was expected to be side-lined at least a month and possibly longer after suffering a high ankle sprain and foot injury less than a week into preseason practice. Injuries have "interrupted any kind of flow to h is practices," said Coach Frank Solich. "But he's kept battling."

Grixby, a member of Solich's first recruiting class in 1998, delayed his enrollment until January of 1999, after suffering a shoulder injury in the Nebraska Shrine Bowl high school all-star game. The Omaha Central graduate received the most valuable player award for the South team in that game.

Grixby was a medical redshirt in 1999, after suffering a torn right ACL during spring practice. He has continued to battle injuries since then.

Grixby shared the No. 2 spot with Steve Kriewald, behind Judd Davies, on the preseason depth chart and has positioned himself to see action not only at fullback but also on special teams.

STILL A SAFETY

Willie Amos played free safety his first two seasons at Nebraska, and safety is where he would prefer to play. But the junior from Sweetwater, Texas, is a cornerback now. And he grudgingly accepts the position. "I still don't like it," he says. "But I'm going to do it if it helps the team."

Secondary coach Marvin Sanders says Amos has the look of a cornerback, "height, his body type, long arms, long torso, all those attributes of a big-time corner. I know cornerbacks come in all shapes and sizes. We've had some great ones around here, DeJuan (Groce), that have a different body type.

"But he does have what's considered the prototypical body type."

FORE

Though there's no time for it now, Le Kevin Smith played some golf to relax over the summer. "You might see some throwing of clubs, but I like to be out there," he says.

His driver stayed in the bag most of the time, however.

"To tell you the truth, I can't even use my big driver," he says. "I can't even get off the tee box (with it). I use my 5-wood, and I can take it just as far as most people with a 1-wood."

He is most effective after the drive and before the green. "When I get to my irons, that's where I've got you," says Smith. "I can use those irons pretty good. But then it's the putter. I'll put six strokes on with the putter."

STATE OF THE HUSKERS

It's Not About Him

Linebacker coach doesn't talk about his playing career, but his players know what he did



Mike BABCOCK

JIMMY WILLIAMS DECLINED a recent interview request because, he said through sports information director Chris Anderson, he didn't want to talk about himself, only his players.

That doesn't come as a surprise to T.J. Hollowell. "Coach Williams, he's the type of guy where, that was his time and this is our time," says the senior Buck linebacker.

"He really doesn't mention too much

about back then, when he played."

Williams' time comprises 16 years, playing at Nebraska from 1978 (on the freshman team) to 1981 and then in the NFL, with Detroit, Minnesota and Tampa Bay, from 1982 to 1993.

The 12 NFL seasons, in particular, give him a unique credibility, according to those who play for him.

"We know whatever he says is gold because he lived it for 12 years," Hollowell says.

"That gives him high credibility."

Although only a handful of college players are able to move on to the NFL (the "League" for short), many, and maybe most, aspire to play at the highest professional level.

Williams did it, defying the longest of odds. He walked on at Nebraska and left as a first-round draft pick of the Detroit Lions, with whom he spent nine of his 12 seasons.

Actually, "spent" isn't a sufficiently active verb to describe those 12 seasons. He was Detroit's defensive MVP twice, and he served as a defensive captain for all three teams.

He also was a captain his senior season at Nebraska, as were Frank Solich and Turner Gill.

Anyway, "just knowing that your coach played 12 years in the 'League,' you've got to respect that," says Ira Cooper, a junior Buck linebacker. "And then we all respect him as a person."

Williams, like the other Cornhusker assistants, has pushed his players hard. But "when we look back on it, we're going to be happy," Cooper says, "because everybody's getting better."

Among the first things Williams told his players was "no excuses, no explanations."

And "I really like that," says senior weakside linebacker Demorrio Williams.

"No matter whether you're sore or whatever, he's going to push you through it. That's what you need. You've got to have somebody that's pushing you and wants the best for you."

Even though Williams' has a no-nonsense approach and can come across as aloof to those outside the team, reporters in particular, he can joke with those he coaches.

"He messes around with us, telling us he can beat us in

a race," Cooper says.

Williams, a 6-foot-3, 215-pound defensive end, ran the fastest 40-yard dash on the team before his senior season at Nebraska, 4.34 seconds hand-held. But his time in the NFL took a toll.

"All those years got his bones sore and aching," says Hollowell.

"He doesn't look like he can move like that now. But I don't doubt that back when he was my age, he was the fastest guy on the team. He looks like an athlete, so I wouldn't doubt it."

If anyone did, they could look it up in the 1981 Cornhusker media guide.

How many steps Williams has lost, "we'll find out if it (a race) ever takes place," Cooper says with a smile. "I think he'll wait until later in the season, when everybody's

all beat up."

Foot speed is important in chasing down ball carriers, but it's irrelevant to coaching others to chase them down — or, preferably, to stop them before they have to be chased down. As with any coach, Williams has to be able to communicate with his players, be an educator, a teacher.

Film study is an important educational tool, and Williams "breaks it down in different ways than we used to break it down," says Cooper. "He had a lot more techniques than we knew about."

Cooper attributes those techniques to Williams' NFL experience.

Players see mistakes on film and then correct them on the practice field. The first time a mistake is made "that's an education,"

Hollowell says. "He always preaches that."

However, "if you keep messing up, there's something wrong," says Cooper. "It's not a good situation after that. Like Coach Williams says, if we aren't getting better, he's not doing his job."

Williams' job extends beyond football, according to Hollowell.

"I think one of his goals is to help us off the field as men, growing up and being mature, as well as being great football players. He used to be a player, so he knows what we're going through, how we feel. You can open up to Coach Williams, even if you're not at his position. You can go talk to him."

You can unless you're a reporter, and he is the subject of the interview. ■



Jimmy Williams spent nine seasons with the Detroit Lions.

Mike Babcock is a former sports columnist for the Lincoln Journal Star. He has covered Nebraska football for more than 20 years. Mike can be reached at MBABCOCK1@neb.rr.com or P.O. Box 6782, Lincoln, NE 68506.

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FROM THE BEAT

Staying Cool

Huskers looking for big things out of senior quarterback Lord



Curt McKEEVER

PERHAPS THE BIGGEST NEWS coming out of Nebraska's high-security preseason fall camp came from Jammal Lord.

No, the Huskers' athletic, but erraticthrowing quarterback wasn't making everyone think he'd all of a sudden discovered a Ken Dorsey-like touch with his passing. But in his sly, almost mischievous manner, the much-maligned senior revealed a sense of humor that may have said more about his

readiness to bounce back from NU's trying season of 2002. Two weeks before Nebraska was to face Oklahoma State in its opener, Lord, who shouldered an unfair share of the blame for last year's 7-7 record, was talking about the game's importance.

"I know we can't lose, or they're going to fire everybody,"

he said. "We (the players) would get fired."

Regardless of what you may think about his talent, you should have appreciated his style of delivery on that one.

Ask anyone and you're bound to hear that the Huskers' hopes of a big turnaround hinge largely on whether Lord improves his play.

Never mind that Frank Solich has overhauled his coaching staff, making it an almost certainty that adjustments will have to be made on the run, all eyes in Husker Nation are squarely on Lord.

Apparently, he's fine with that kind of scrutiny.

During the preseason, Lord said, his passing was "up and down." His confidence, however, hadn't wavered.

"I'm cool,"Lord said. "I'm ready to go. But we still have to iron some things out."

Last season, the 6-foot-2, 220-pounder established a school record for rushing yards by a quarterback (1,412) and total offense (2,774). It was his passing that made fans grumble. Frequently facing pressure from defenders, Lord completed just 46 percent of his throws and threw as many interceptions (12) as he did touchdown passes.

Even now, some fans clamor for someone to replace him.

Freshman Joe Dailey, perhaps. That, however, isn't likely to occur.

"There's really no question right now that Jammal's going to be the guy," said Ross Pilkington, the team's leading returning receiver. "He had a decent year last year, and I think it was a building block for this year. I think it makes all the difference in the world when you have one season under your belt.

"I think everybody's looking for big things out of him."

Lord understands he must produce — wins probably more than statistics — if he is to keep his critics and competition at a safe distance.

His attitude about it coming into the season had to have been a plus.

"I think he's much improved," Solich said. "He's prac-

ticed well. I think he has a better handle on the passing game and has really taken to this offense very well.

"He has it down to the point where I think he has great confidence in himself."

Solich still wants to keep challenging the Huskers' mostpotent playmaker.

"We have an idea that Jammal will start off the year for us at quarterback, but we'll see (if a change gets made)," he said

Solich has made it clear he would like Lord to complete at least 55 percent of his throws this season. Thanks in part to his shaky number last year, Nebraska finished 59th nationally in total offense.

According to Solich, first-year offensive coordinator Barney Cotton will have Nebraska throwing more frequently on "early downs" and "taking more chances" than Solich

did as an offensive coordinator.

Lord has said that he'll be throwing more high-percentage passes this season.

He'll also be handing off to a trio of I-backs that all look improved.

David Horne has gained 10 pounds and is running with more authority between the tackles. Cory Ross has dropped more than 10 pounds and is showing more quickness. And Josh Davis seems determined to make the most of his final year in the program.

But if Nebraska expects to make the kind of leap it needs to make offensively (last year's pergame average of 373.1 yards was its lowest since 1969), it'll need much better play up front. That line group returns three starters — tackles Richie Incognito and Dan Vili Waldrop, and left guard Mike Erickson — which ought to help in Lord's

quest to be more effective.

And shield he and his head coach from the constant heat coming from their doubters.

Solich is now in his sixth season as the person in charge of Nebraska's program, and despite compiling a 49-16 record coming into it, has been placed on the proverbial "hot seat" by the national media.

First-year Athletic Director Steve Pederson has given no indication that's the case, and Solich can't worry about such speculation because it might affect his daily productivity.

Playing a schedule loaded with major roadblocks, NU will need him at the top of his game, too. Look at the Huskers' slate and you won't find more than a few gimmes.

It's no wonder Solich increased the level of intensity in preseason camp.

If Nebraska doesn't stay focused on business, Lord, bless his humor, might see his light-hearted comment become a prophecy.



Jammal Lord expects to throw more highpercentage passes.

Curt McKeever is a sportswriter, covering the University of Nebraska for the Lincoln Journal Star. In addition to reporting on football he is the primary beat writer for the men's basketball and baseball teams.

A Fun **Look Ahead**

Computer coaches give interesting look at Nebraska's 2003 season



DOUGLASS the Huskers.

WE ALREADY KNOW how Nebraska fared against Oklahoma State in the season opener, but the Cornhuskers' performance only piqued my curiosity as to what might happen in the remainder of the year.

Sure, one could consult the ol' crystal ball, but in this high-tech era, why be so old-fashioned? Instead, I rented EA Sports NCAA Football 2004 for the X-Box video game system in hopes of getting a more "accurate" read on

Granted, the simulation hardly qualified as scientific, but it sure was fun. With the computer coaches controlling both teams, here's how Nebraska's "cyber season" went:

 Nebraska 42, Oklahoma State 13 — The Cowboys led 10-7 after the first quarter but wilted as the Husker defense

held All-America receiver Rashaun Woods below 100 yards receiving and running back Tatum Bell below 100 yards rushing. I-back David Horne rushed for 109 yards on 24 carries and two touchdowns to lead NU.

• Nebraska 42, Utah State 17 — Utah State shocked the Memorial Stadium crowd by taking a 14-7 lead before the Huskers roared back with 35 unanswered points. The Blackshirts allowed just a fourth-quarter field goal the rest of the way. NU Iback Josh Davis, filling in for the injured Horne, had a huge game with 185 yards rushing and five TDs on 34 carries.

• Nebraska 17, Penn State 3 - After opening 2-0, Nebraska jumped back into the polls at No. 25 before hosting Penn State. The Huskers dominated the game from the beginning, allowing only a fourth-quarter field goal to the Nittany Lions. NU quarterback Jammal Lord ran for two scores, and

cornerback Fabian Washington recorded a pair of intercep-

tions in the win.

 Southern Miss 28, Nebraska 17 — After climbing to No. 21 in the polls, the road was unkind to the Huskers as Southern Miss scored 14 third-quarter points and held Nebraska scoreless in the fourth quarter. Lord was intercepted three times, and NU lost two fumbles in the Thursday night ESPN-televised game against the Golden Eagles.

• Nebraska 38, Troy State 14 - The Big Red dropped out of the top 25 with its loss but returned to the comforts of home to beat Troy State. The good news for the Huskers was that Horne appeared to be healthy again, rushing for 122

yards and a pair of TDs on just 11 carries.

 Nebraska 28, Missouri 16 — In a bit of a surprise, NU went on the road to Columbia and bolted to a 14-0 first-quarter lead on a Lord touchdown pass to Ross Pilkington and a goal-line plunge by fullback Judd Davies. Quarterback Brad Smith attempted to rally the previously unbeaten Tigers, but safety Josh Bullocks intercepted a Smith pass and returned it 64 yards for a TD and a 28-10 lead late in the third quarter.

• Nebraska 34, Texas A&M 27 — Back in the polls at No. 25 following the big win at Missouri, Nebraska outgunned Texas A&M at home to win the Bill Byrne Bowl. Linebacker

Demorrio Williams had a huge game, recording eight tackles and intercepting two passes, one of which he returned for a touchdown to help his team rally from a 17-10 deficit in the third quarter. Lord ran for two TDs and passed for another.

· Nebraska 28, Iowa State 13 - Ranked 24th, Nebraska built a 14-0 halftime lead beat the Cyclones behind 190 yards rushing and two TDs from Horne. Lord enjoyed one of his most efficient passing games, completing 10-of-16 attempts for 175 yards and two TDs, including a 72-yarder scoring strike to tight end Matt Herian. The Huskers improved to 7-1 in the simulated season.

 Texas 39, Nebraska 12 — Apparently Mack Brown has it all together in the cyber world as the Longhorns had upset Oklahoma and entered the game 8-0 and ranked No. 1. Horne was Nebraska's leading rusher with 74 yards as the Huskers were limited to four Sandro DeAngelis field goals and were never really in the game after trailing 21-6 at halftime.

> Nebraska 45, Kansas 10 — Despite a lopsided loss at Texas, the Huskers remained ranked at No. 24 heading into the game against surprising 4-5 Kansas. Horne rushed for 162 yards and three TDs as Nebraska took a 28-3 lead at intermission and extended it to 38-3 after three quar-

> Kansas State 27, Nebraska 24 — In a key Big 12 North Division battle, the No. 7-ranked Wildcats got their first win at Lincoln since 1968. K-State running back Darren Sproles rushed for 135 yards and two TDs. Lord completed 10-of-18 passes for 101 yards and rushed for 76 yards and two TDs in a losing effort for No. 21 Nebraska.

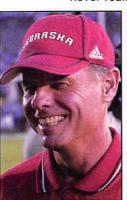
> • Nebraska 20, Colorado 6 - Another road shocker for Nebraska as it handled a Colorado team struggling to find any offense. The loss dropped the Buffs to 6-6. Lord rushed for 104 yards, and middle linebacker Barrett Ruud earned

player of the game honors with 12 tackles and an interception.

 Nebraska 32, UCLA 15 — The Huskers put the finishing touches on a 10-3 season with a victory over UCLA in the Holiday Bowl at San Diego. Horne was again the star, rushing for 117 yards and three TD, while DeAngelis kicked three field goals, and the Huskers end the season ranked No. 13.

Thinking that the results seemed fairly optimistic for Nebraska, I decided to use the quick-play option and simulate the season 10 additional times for a better sample. Again, the results were favorable for the Huskers as they twice finished 8-5, twice won nine games, won 10 games four times and also had 11- and 12-win seasons. NU made three appearances in the Big 12 Championship game, losing twice to Oklahoma and winning once against Texas.

After the Huskers finished 12-2 with a Fiesta Bowl win over Virginia in their best simulated season, the computer offered Frank Solich a three-year contract extension. Now that's what I call a realistic video game.



Frank Solich might be happy with a season like the simulated one.

Terry Douglass is the sports editor of the Grand Island Independent. He can be reached at tdbbdouglass@earthlink.net.

PLAYER PROFILE

Vivid Memories

Columbine tragedy struck close to home for NU guard

ore than four years have passed. But the subject still elicits powerful emotions, and draws them to the surface. The words come slowly at first as Jake Andersen responds to a question.

"It's something I'll never forget," he says. "I think about it every day."

It is the death of a cousin, Matt Kechter, two months after his 16th birthday. Kechter, also Andersen's best friend, was among those killed at Columbine High in Littleton, Colo., in April of 1999.

Two Columbine students shot 12 classmates, a teacher and themselves.

Andersen remembers everything from that day, much too vividly.

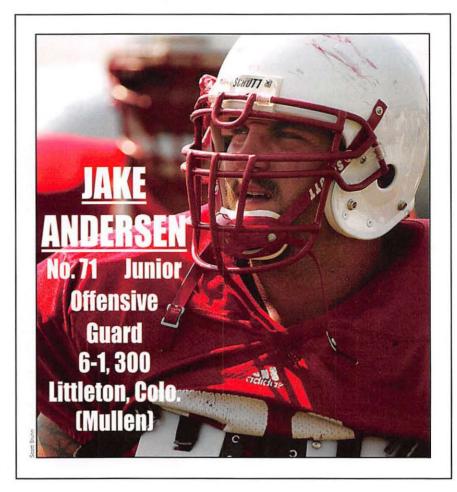
He and a teammate on the Denver Mullen High School track and field team were driving to a meet when they heard a radio bulletin about trouble at Columbine High. The meet was interrupted by up-dates on the situation, but Andersen didn't give it much thought until he called home afterward.

His mom told him on the phone to be careful, "just be real safe," she said. "I could tell my mom was real upset," says Andersen. "So then I kind of knew something was wrong."

He and his family didn't find out how wrong until the next day.

Andersen doesn't remember much about the days that followed. "It all really was kind of a blur," he says. "It was hard, a real tough thing to go through." And he's still going through it now.

Nebraska's junior offensive guard dedicated his career to his cousin. And that dedication is no less significant now than when he decided to do it. "That's definitely a big part," he says.



He speaks in measured tones. "When I'm out there . . . it's a big deal for me."

Andersen is finally in a position to make a significant contribution in the offensive line. A redshirt season and two as a backup finally appear to be paying off. And the legal issues surrounding Junior Tagoa'i, who was eventually dismissed from the team, have increased the opportunity for Andersen and sophomore walk-on Brandon Koch.

"I think Jake has come a long way," says Coach Frank Solich. "His body style is not that of the prototype offensive lineman. He doesn't have great height. He's kind of wide.

"But he does have great strength. He's worked very hard in the weight room."

The 6-foot-1, 300-pound Andersen was a finalist for the team's lifter-of-

the-year award.

His weight room commitment began before his freshman year in high school. Some of the older football players were lifting weights during the summer, in preparation for the season, and "I just started going along, going in and working out with them," he says. "Ever since then, it became what I had to do. If I wanted to play football, I had to lift weights. So they kind of went hand in hand."

Eventually, he began to enjoy the lifting. Now, "when I don't, like if we have some time off and I don't lift weights, and I'm just sitting around for a week or so, I'll feel kind of gross, like I'm being lazy," he says. "I think I need it. But the reason I also like it is for football."

Kechter also was a football player. The two were teammates on youth-league teams coached by Anderson's father, Keith, playing side-by-side in the offensive line, guard and center.

Kechter would have been a starting defensive lineman at Columbine.

Matt's death "definitely made me look at things a little differently, made me appreciate what I have, don't take things for granted," Andersen says. "In a way, it kind of made me re-dedicate myself to football. If I'm going to do something, put my mind to it, give it my all."

Not that he needed motivation. In addition to Colorado and Colorado State, he was recruited by Southern California. "I wouldn't describe myself as someone that did (take things for granted), but I think after that happened, I realized that other people do, and at times I do," he says.

"It helped me try to correct those

Since he doesn't remember much about the days and even weeks following the tragic events at Columbine High, "I can't really say when I was able to deal with it," Andersen says.

His words come haltingly, on a hot day in late August.

The truth is, he has never come to grips with what happened to his cousin.

He is still trying to now.





FEATURE STORY

Replication

NU's Larson continues to refine his punting technique

he key to punting is replication. And the key to replication is repetition.

The process is clear-cut, though hardly that simple.

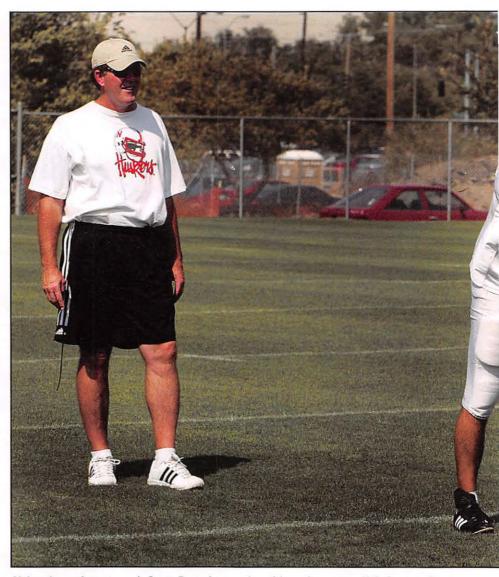
Punters, and place-kickers for that matter, are trying to "replicate their best effort at that skill every time," says Scott Downing, who coaches Nebraska's kickers as well as tight ends.

So the closer they come to swinging their leg the same way, "the better they are," he says. "That's the biggest thing they're trying to do, the same skill over and over and over again."

Downing speaks from experience. He was once a punter. But on-the-job training isn't essential to what he does. As with any coach or teacher, "if you watch it long enough, if you study it long enough, if you break it down, then you can help guys improve their technique," he says.

Kyle Larson will attest to that. "Stuff that I've worked on since Coach Downing came in has been very beneficial," Larson says. "He has taught me a few things. It's helped out a lot."

Statistics would seem to indicate that the Cornhusker senior hasn't needed much help. He ranked 11th



Nebraska assistant coach Scott Downing works with senior punter Kyle Larson during a preseason practice session.

By Mike Babcock Photos by Scott Bruhn

nationally last season, averaging 43.2 yards per punt, putting 23 of his 73 punts inside the opponents' 20-yard line. Because of his efforts, Nebraska

ranked fifth nationally in net punting.

Going into this season, he was second on the school list for career

Repetition



average, 42.52 yards.

But Larson continues to refine his technique even though he's been punting for as long as he can remember. While other youngsters might watch television or play video games, he would kick a football, a solitary activity when his father wasn't around because his family lived on a farm.

The farm is located near tiny Funk, in central Nebraska.

His first "big-guy football" was a

Christmas gift. He doesn't remember how old he was.

Larson would take his football into a large backyard and attempt to punt it over the pine trees in a windbreak that bordered the yard. He wasn't successful probably until he was in the sixth grade, or maybe junior high. Now, of course, he can send it high over the trees, even though they've grown.

He did a lot of kicking on the farm. It became "almost like a hobby." But he was serious enough about it to earn a mantel full of trophies for state punt-pass-and-kick competitions.

Because of those contests, he got to punt in Memorial Stadium before he became a Cornhusker. "It was exciting to come down here and punt on this field," says Larson.

"Little did I know, a few years later, that I would be punting here."

His punting foundation had been laid by the time he walked on at Nebraska, after earning first-team all-state recognition as a punter his senior year at Kearney High. He averaged a state-best 46.5 yards per punt that season and finished with a career average of over 40.

He probably could have been a place-kicker, too, but he gave that up his sophomore year in high school because of the demands of playing center on offense and linebacker on defense.

Larson walked on at Nebraska to punt, even though he might have gone to a smaller school and played a position, too. Punting was something "I could just focus on, kind of fine-tune," he says. "I really enjoyed the positions. I still miss them, the hitting and that kind of stuff.

"But overall, the punting is what worked out well for me."

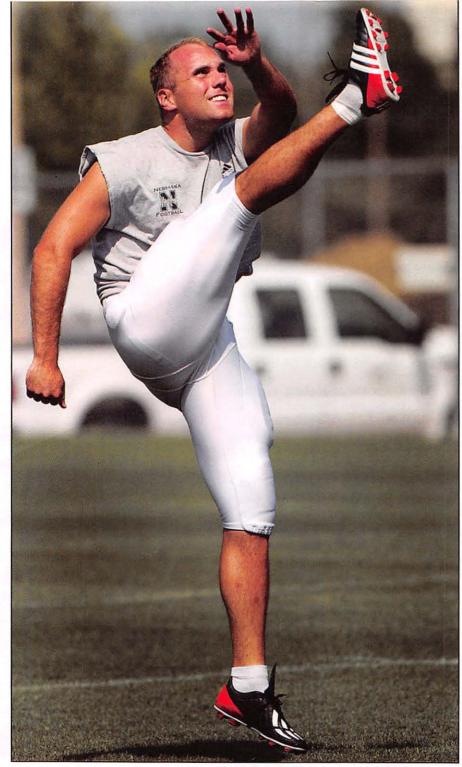
There was a time when punters, and kickers in general, might have distanced themselves from the rest of

"That's the biggest thing they're trying to do, the same skill over and over and over again."

 Husker assistant Scott Downing

the team. But that's no longer the case. Even though Larson was sidelined throughout preseason practice because of a bruised right foot and sprained ankle, he was on the field every day, working.

The missed time probably benefited him, according to Downing. "Kickers have a tendency during two-a-days, when everybody else out there is running and doing all that stuff and getting tired, to think they have to go out and kick or punt



Kyle Larson is among Nebraska's all-time punting leaders.

NEBRASKA PUNTING STATISTICS					
SEASON AVERAGE		CAREER AVERAGE			
Dan Hadenfeldt (1999)	44.98	Dan Hadenfeldt (1997-2000)	44.54		
Bill LaFleur (1998)	44.94	Kyle Larson (2001-present)	42.92		
Jesse Kosch (1996)	44.70	Jesse Kosch (1994-97)	41.92		
Hadenfeldt (2000)	43.79	Mike Stigge (1989-92)	41.75		
Grant Campbell (1981)	43.36	Scott Livingston (1982-84)	41.04		
Kyle Larson (2002)	43.23	Grant Campbell (1980-82)	41.00		
Mike Stigge (1992)	43.21	Jack Pesek (1946-47)	40.44		
Darin Erstad (1994)	42.60	Rich Sanger (1971-73)	40.18		
Larson (2001)	42.52	Tim Smith (1977-79)	40.03		
Dan Wingard (1985)	42.04	John Kroeker (1986-88)	39.98		

for two hours as well," he says.

"Sometimes, you just have to say, 'Hey, look, sit down over here and work on the technical stuff and not kick.' That's what Kyle needs to do, those little things."

Larson also had to prepare himself mentally for his final season at Nebraska during fall camp. Punting is more than having a strong leg and the proper technique. A position player has some leeway because he has at least three downs to get it right. A punter or place-kicker has only one down.

"So they're constantly up mentally and then relaxing," says Downing.

"They warm up how many times? They wear themselves out warming up because they have to stand on the sideline and maybe they're only in there for five or six plays, but they have to be fully stretched and ready to go. Most of punting and kicking is how they do it in their mind. It's a mind game.

"When you're (punting or kicking) at a high level, you're very, very focused."

Because of that, "they've got to be into the game the whole time," he says. "The good ones, you never have to call, 'Punt team up.' They're already there, already thinking about the situation."

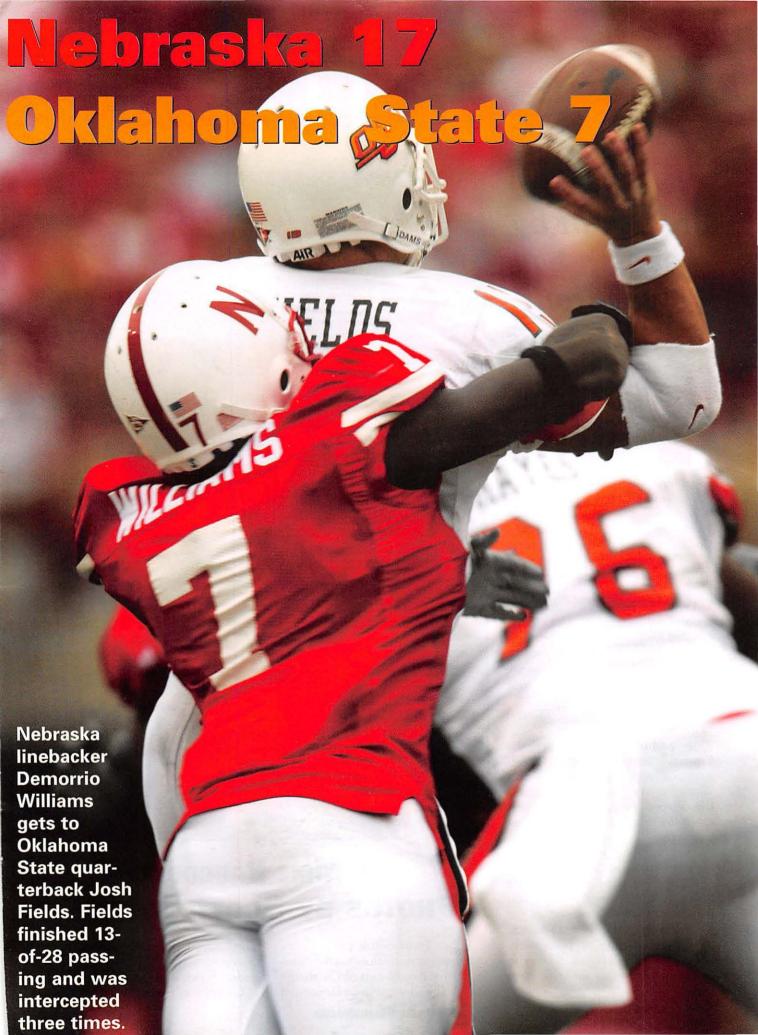
Among his responsibilities as their coach is to "put them in situations, just like you put quarterbacks in game situations. They have a lot of stuff to be aware of when they go on the field."

While he was sidelined by the injuries, Larson worked with the deep-snappers, worked on his drops and "just handled the ball." He went through his routine. He just couldn't punt.

Larson has never gone to a punting camp or worked with a punting specialist other than Dan Young and now Downing. "I've just always been about repetition," he says.

That repetition has enhanced his chances of replication, doing it the same way.

"I just take as many kicks as I can," Larson says, "within reason." ■



Dominant

NU's offense helps out by keeping ball away from the Cowboys

he question was curious. But Barney Cotton answered it with good humor, following Nebraska's 17-7 victory against Oklahoma State.

Someone wanted to know if he was going to offer to mow Bo Pelini's yard the next day. No, the Cornhuskers' offensive coordinator said, "I told Bo I loved him after the game and that's as far as it goes. I'm not going to do any work for him."

Pelini is Nebraska's defensive coordinator, of course, and Cotton credited his Blackshirts for the victory. "Our defense, I can't say enough about," said Cotton. "The reason we won the game was because our defense played so well.

"We did just enough (offensively) to get us by."

In addition to shackling the Cowboy offense, and limiting All-America wide receiver Rashaun Woods to five catches for 47 yards, the defense scored Nebraska's first touchdown and set up the second with a fumble recovery.

Even so, Pelini wouldn't dismiss the contribution of Cotton's offense.

"They controlled the ball a lot today, which obviously helps you play great defense," he said of the Cornhuskers' more than 13-minute advantage in time of possession. "They killed a lot of clock. So they're as much responsible for what happened."



By MIKE BABCOCK PHOTOS BY SCOTT BRUHN

Coach Frank Solich praised both of his new coordinators for the victory against No. 24-ranked Oklahoma State. The defensive achievement might have been more obvious, but Cotton deserved "a great deal of credit," Solich said.

Cotton was under "a lot of pres-

Defense





Defensive coordinator Bo Pelini (left) and his Blackshirts had an impressive debut in the opener against Oklahoma State. The defense, including end Benard Thomas (5, above), put the clamps on OSU quarterback Josh Fields.

GAME STORY

sure," said Solich, because of the fan expectations regarding Nebraska's restructured offense, "what he was going to be all about. I had nightmare dreams of him trying to throw deep on the very first play." Solich needn't have lost any sleep over that. The Cornhuskers' first play from scrimmage was a handoff to I-back Josh Davis for a gain of 4 yards.

Their first 13 plays were runs, in fact, and by day's end, quarterback Jammal Lord had thrown only16 passes. Eight were complete, 50 per-

cent, for 78 yards.

"It wasn't a pretty 50 percent, by any means," Cotton said. But it was enough.

And it was better than Oklahoma State's Josh Fields, who completed 13-of-28 passes for 97 yards and one touchdown, with three interceptions.

The touchdown, 4 yards to



Nebraska rushed for 268 yards, including 95 by senior I-back Josh Davis (right), who was making his first start. Fullback Judd Davies (above) scored the only touchdown by the offense on a 2-yard run in the third quarter.

Woods, capped a nine-play, 52-yard drive on the Cowboys' first possession. At that point, it appeared Nebraska might be in for a long day. But Oklahoma State managed only 131 yards the rest of the way.

Defensively, "we just kind of settled in," said Pelini. "I thought the players played their hearts out. They kept their cool. They applied their rules. They communicated. They did a great job. It was nothing magical we did as a staff."

It might have seemed like magic, though, containing the Cowboy attack.

The lone touchdown was enough for a halftime lead, however, as Nebraska had the ball inside the Oklahoma State 20-yard line three times but could come away with only three points, on a 28-yard Sandro DeAngelis field goal — on the first series.

A second DeAngelis attempt, from 34 yards, hit the left upright

with 5:48 remaining in the half, and a third, from 33 yards, was blocked 1 second before the intermission. Solich's decision to settle for the attempt drew a smattering of boos.

"Oh, I heard them," Cotton said.
"But to be honest with you, when you get down in the red zone three times, you'd better come away with more than three points.

"We won't win many games with that."

Pelini considered it only a matter of time until "the offense would break through. We had a lot of confidence in what our offense can do," he said.

Just in case the red-zone problems continued, however, "going out for the second half, the defense said, 'We need to get a touchdown,'" said Barrett Ruud.

Early in the third quarter, the defense made good on that vow, when Ruud picked up a Tatum Bell fumble and returned it 15 yards for the score.

"I was just running to the ball," said the junior middle linebacker. "All I was worried about was scooping it up. You didn't want to kick it out of bounds.

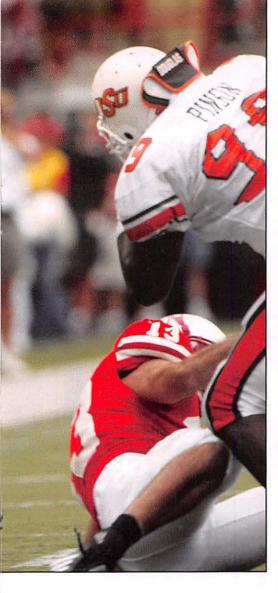
"I knew if I picked it up, I'd probably have a touchdown."

By quarter's end, Nebraska had another touchdown, compliments of the defense. Jerrell Pippens forced a Fields' fumble, recovered by Ryon Bingham at the Cowboy 13-yard line. Two runs later, fullback Judd Davies scored from the 2.

In the second half, Oklahoma State began to wear down under the Cornhuskers' ground assault — 65 of their 81 plays from scrimmage were

They had little reason to throw a lot.

"When you're doing that and you're playing physical and you feel it's going to take a toll, you don't veer away from that too much,"



Solich said.

Nebraska's No. 1 goal on offense was that "we were physical," he said, "that we came off the ball, that we pounded them and pounded them."

Cotton's system is new, but the foundation is the same.

"Little by little I think you saw the pile was moving in their direction. We became very basic," he said. "You probably saw only about a third of our offense today because of the way the game unfolded. This was a physical Big 12 football game."

And it was "going to be won by who was most physical."

The defense was physical, too, punishing Fields in particular. That wasn't the system, said Pelini, it was "the players playing hard and playing with passion. It was great to see. I thought they played hard from start to finish."

As it turned out, there was plenty of credit to go around. ■

GAME NOTES

Notes And Quotes From The Oklahoma State Game

HUSKER NATION

Some 800 former players and coaches were on hand for the game, marching into Memorial Stadium beforehand (photo on Page 24). Many watched the game from the sidelines. "I didn't know what the whole Husker Nation was going to be like," said linebacker Barrett Ruud. "I saw these old dudes kind of going nuts and I loved it."

Ruud's father, Tom, and uncles John Ruud and Bob Martin all were Cornhusker lettermen, as was his great grandfather, Clarence Swanson.

Even though there were a few boos near the end of the first half, after an unsuccessful field goal attempt, the crowd of 78,058 — Nebraska's 256th consecutive home sellout — made playing the game fun, according to Ruud.

"I had a great time when the fans are into that much," he said.

TURNOVER TROUBLE

Nebraska forced five turnovers, two interceptions by Josh Bullocks, an interception by Lornell McPherson and fumble recoveries by Ryon Bingham and Barrett Ruud. The Cornhuskers' turnover high in a game last season was three.

Ruud's fumble recovery for a touchdown was Nebraska's first defensive touchdown since Fabian Washington's interception return in last season's opener.

The Cornhuskers had two turnovers, an interception and a lost fumble.

TRIPLE DUTY

Senior Josh Davis was the starter at I-back in addition to being the No. 1 kick-off returner and punt returner. He was the Cornhuskers' leading rusher with 95 yards on 20 carries and returned four kicks, including three punts. Even so, he wasn't worn out. "Actually, I felt great," he said. "I didn't see anybody winded or tired."

The carries and rushing yardage were career highs.

New offensive coordinator Barney Cotton spread the carries around. Quarterback Jammal Lord had 18, I-back David Horne had 15 and fullback Judd Davies got 10.

CAPTAIN, TOO

In addition to four season-long captains, the Nebraska coaches are selecting a special teams captain for each game. The first was Jerrell Pippens.

NEWCOMERS

Three true freshmen saw action in the game: wide receiver Andy Birkel, defensive tackle Brandon Teamer and short snapper Lane Kelly, a walk-on from Omaha Creighton Prep who was included in the 105 for preseason practice. True freshmen Joe Dailey (quarterback), Tierre Green (I-back), Greg Austin (center), J.B. Phillips (tight end), Bo Ruud (Buck linebacker) and David Dyches (kicker) also suited up.

Junior college transfers Donald DeFrand (cornerback), Darren DeLone (offensive tackle) and Wali Muhammad (defensive end) did not see action.

Muhammad was injured and did not suit up.

ENDORF OUT

Senior walk-on Dale Endorf went into the game as Nebraska's kickoff man, but suffered an injury to his right knee on the first kickoff. Sandro DeAngelis replaced him.

TRIPLETS THWARTED

Oklahoma State came to Lincoln ranked No. 24 nationally by both major polls, with an offensive threesome being compared to the Cowboys' triplets of the late 1980s: quarterback Mike Gundy, tailback Barry Sanders and wide receiver Hart Lee Dykes. But the 2003 version of the triplets had trouble against the Blackshirts.

Quarterback Josh Fields threw three interceptions. Tailback Tatum Bell averaged less than 4 yards per carry. And All-America wide receiver Rashaun Woods caught only five passes for 47 yards, including just three after the first series.

Woods had 107 receptions for 1,695 yards and 17 touchdowns last season.

Cornhusker cornerback Fabian Washington, one of those who helped contain Woods, explained Nebraska's defensive approach.

"Eleven guys running to the ball," he said. "It'll work.

The Cornhusker secondary used more zone coverage than it did in last season's 24-21 loss at Oklahoma State — Woods had 11 catches for 134 yards.■

SCOUTING REPORT

2003 SCHEDULE

1 Aug. 30 Oklahoma St. (0-1), W 17-7 1-0

2 Sept. 6 Utah State (0-1), 11:30 a.m., FSN

3 Sept. 13 Penn State (1-0), 7 p.m., ABC

4 Sept. 25 @ Southern Miss (0-1), 6:30 p.m., ESPN

5 Oct. 4 Troy State (0-1), TBA

6 Oct. 11 @ Missouri (1-0). TBA

7 Oct. 18 Texas A&M (1-0). TBA (Homecoming)

8 Oct. 25 Iowa State (1-0), TBA

9 Nov. 1 @ Texas (0-0), TBA

10 Nov. 8 @ Kansas (0-1), TBA

11 Nov. 15 Kansas State (2-0), TBA

12 Nov. 28 @ Colorado (1-0), 11 a.m., ABC Dec. 7 Big 12 Championship

at Kansas City, Mo., 7 p.m.

UPCOMING OPPONENTS' SCHEDULES

	Utah State (0-1)		Penn State (1-0)
Aug. 28	@ Utah, L 40-20	Aug. 30	Temple, W 23-10
Sept. 6	@ Nebraska	Sept. 6	Boston College
Sept. 13	@ Arizona State	Sept. 13	@ Nebraska
Sept. 27	Louisiana-Monroe	Sept. 20	Kent State
Oct. 4	@ New Mexico	Sept. 27	Minnesota
Oct. 11	Wyoming	Oct. 4	Wisconsin
Oct. 18	@ North Texas	Oct. 11	@ Purdue
Oct. 25	Arkansas State	Oct. 25	@ Iowa
Nov. 1	Middle Tennessee State	Nov. 1	Ohio State
Nov. 8	@ New Mexico State	Nov. 8	@ Northwestern
Nov. 15	Troy State	Nov. 15	Indiana
Nov. 22	@ Idaho	Nov. 22	@ Michigan State

BIG 12 AT A GLANCE

Saturday, Aug. 23

Kansas State 42, California 28

Saturday, Aug. 30
Nebraska 17, Oklahoma State 7
Kansas State 41, Troy State 5
Missouri 22, Illinois 15
Texas A&M 26, Arkansas State 11
Iowa State 17, Northern Iowa 10
Northwestern 28, Kansas 20
Colorado 42, Colorado State 35
Texas Tech 58, SMU 10
Oklahoma 37, North Texas 3
UAB 24, Baylor 10

Sunday, Aug. 31 New Mexico State at Texas Saturday, Sept. 6

Utah State at Nebraska
Ohio at Iowa State
UCLA at Colorado
Missouri at Ball State
UNLV at Kansas
New Mexico at Texas Tech
Wyoming at Oklahoma State
McNeese State at Kansas State
Oklahoma at Alabama (ESPN), 6:30 p.m.
Utah at Texas A&M, 7 p.m.
Baylor at North Texas, 7:05 p.m.

www.huskersillustrated.com

GAME 2

Utah State Sept. 6

Location: Logan, Utah Enrollment: 21,490 2003 record: 0-1 Coach: Mick Dennehy.



4th year Series: Nebraska leads 7-0

11:30 a.m. CDT, FSN Memorial Stadium, Lincoln, Neb.

Aggie to Watch

Junior quarterback Travis Cox, making his first career start, passed

for 280 yards and one touchdown and ran for another score in the Aggies' 40-20 season-opening loss to Utah. Cox, who played in five games as a backup to Jose



Fuentes in 2002, had attempted just 16 passes entering this season, completing 9.

Quick Facts

Utah State, which spent the past two seasons as a Division I Independent, joins the Sun Belt Conference this fall. The Aggies had been members of the Big West Conference, which stopped sponsoring the sport after the 2000 season. The Sun Belt is made up of Arkansas State, Idaho, Louisiana-Lafayette, Louisiana-Monroe, Middle Tennessee, New Mexico State, North Texas and the Aggies.

USU lost its top passer (Jose Fuentes), top receiver (Kevin Curtis) and top rusher (James Samuel) for the first time since 1991, when three seniors led USU in those categories. Last year, Fuentes produced the best passing season in school history with 3,268 yards, while Curtis had the fourth best receiving season (1,258 yards), and Samuel rushed for 633 of the Aggies' 929 yards.

ON DECK

Penn State Sept. 13

Location: University Park,

Enrollment: 41,445 2003 record: 1-0

Coach: Joe Paterno, 38h year Series: Penn State leads 7-5

7 p.m. CDT, ABC Memorial Stadium, Lincoln, Neb.

TENTATIVE 2-DEEPS

XWI		Ross Pilkington*	6-0	190	So.
	19	Andy Birkel	6-2	170	Fr.
LT	51	Richie Incognito*	6-3	300	So.
	69	Nick Povendo*	6-3	300	Jr.
LG	78	Mike Erickson**	6-4	305	Jr.
	72	Tim Green	6-4	325	Sr.
C	79	Josh Sewell*	6-2	300	Sr.
	64	Kurt Mann	6-3	290	RFr.
RG	71	Jake Andersen*	6-1	300	Jr.
	75	Brandon Koch	6-3	310	So.
RT	68	Dan Vili Waldrop***	6-5	350	Sr.
	68	Darren DeLone	6-5	320	Jr.
TE	11	Matt Herian*	6-5	240	So.
	82	Phil Peetz**	6-2	270	Sr.
QB	5	Jammal Lord***	6-2	220	Sr.
	16	Mike Stuntz**	6-1	200	Jr.
FB	4	Judd Davies***	6-0	250	Sr.
	45	Steve Kriewald**	5-10	250	Jr.
IB 💮		Josh Davis**	5-11	205	Sr.
	9	David Horne*	6-0	200	So.

NERRASKA DEFENSE

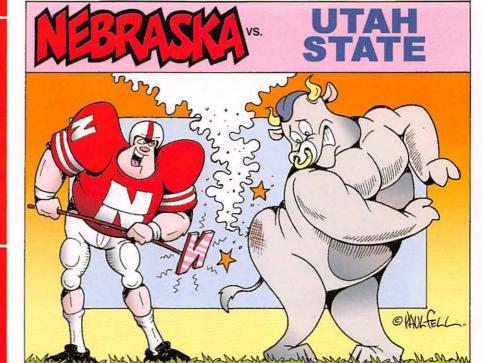
1111	• 1111	HORN BEITHUL			
LDE	- 5	Benard Thomas**	6-4	265	Jr.
	96	Titus Adams*	6-3	290	So.
NT	59	Ryon Bingham**	6-3	290	Sr.
	94	Patrick Kabongo***	6-6	320	Sr.
DT	66	Le Kevin Smith*	6-2	305	So.
	74	Brandon Teamer	6-5	270	Fr.
RDE	88	Trevor Johnson***	6-4	255	Sr.
	90	Adam Carriker	6-6	260	RFr.
BLB	2	T.J. Hollowell***	6-0	230	Sr.
	11	Ira Cooper**	6-2	230	Jr.
MLB	38	Barrett Ruud*	6-2	240	Jr.
	54	Chad Sievers*	6-3	230	Jr.
WLB	7	Demorrio Williams	6-1	210	Sr.
	39	Chad Buller*	5-11	215	Sr.
LCB	3	Fabian Washington*	5-11	175	So.
	4	Terrell Butler*	5-10	190	Sr.
FS	20	Josh Bullocks*	6-1	195	So.
	31	Jerrell Pippens***	6-2	195	Sr.
SS	21	Philip Bland**	5-11	205	Jr.
or	14	Daniel Bullocks*	6-1	200	So.
RCB	28	Pat Ricketts***	5-11	180	Sr.
or	-1	Lornell McPherson**	5-9	175	Jr.
P	19	Kyle Larson**	6-0	205	Sr.

HTAN STATE DEFENSE

all I	Control of the Control			
10	Chris Stallworth	6-3	214	Sr.
	Raymond Hicks	5-10	184	Jr.
72	Donald Penn	6-5	302	So.
65	Brenen Burningham	6-7	305	Jr.
77	Greg Vandermade	6-3	289	Sr.
61	Victor Eti	6-2	324	Jr.
59	Aric Galliano	6-3	297	Sr.
77	Greg Vandermade	6-3	289	Sr.
63	Trevor Hutton	6-3	308	Sr.
74	Grant Calverley	6-4	296	Sr.
78	Elliott Tupea	6-2	313	Jr.
65	Brenen Burningham	6-7	305	Jr.
86	Patrick McNutt	6-5	255	So.
87	Jason Stephens	6-4	220	Fr.
	Travis Cox	6-2	211	Jr.
12	Matt Crivello	6-1	191	Jr.
39	David Fiefia	5-8	200	Sr.
7	Richard Watson	5-9	208	So.
89	Chris Cooley	6-4	252	Sr.
47	Trent Tate	5-9	222	Jr.
80	Jason Thomas	6-3	208	So.
18	Tony Pennyman	5-10	180	Fr.
13	Justin Hamblin	5-11	148	Fr.
	10 5 72 65 77 61 59 77 63 74 78 65 86 87 4 12 39 47 89 47 80 18	5 Raymond Hicks 7 Donald Penn 65 Brenen Burningham 77 Greg Vandermade 61 Victor Eti 59 Aric Galliano 77 Greg Vandermade 63 Trevor Hutton 74 Grant Calverley 78 Elliott Tupea 78 Brenen Burningham 78 Patrick McNutt 79 Jason Stephens 70 Travis Cox 71 Matt Crivello 72 David Fiefia 73 Richard Watson 74 Trent Tate 75 Jason Thomas 76 Trony Pennyman	10 Chris Stallworth 6-3 5 Raymond Hicks 5-10 72 Donald Penn 6-5 65 Brenen Burningham 6-7 77 Greg Vandermade 6-3 10 Victor Eti 6-2 59 Aric Galliano 6-3 77 Greg Vandermade 6-3 37 Trevor Hutton 6-3 74 Grant Calverley 6-4 78 Elliott Tupea 6-2 65 Brenen Burningham 6-7 86 Patrick McNutt 6-5 87 Jason Stephens 6-4 4 Travis Cox 6-2 2 Matt Crivello 6-1 39 David Fieffa 5-8 7 Richard Watson 5-9 80 Chris Cooley 6-4 7 Trent Tate 5-9 80 Jason Thomas 6-3 81 Tony Pennyman 5-10	10 Chris Stallworth 6-3 214 5 Raymond Hicks 5-10 184 72 Donald Penn 6-5 302 65 Brenen Burningham 6-7 305 77 Greg Vandermade 6-3 289 61 Victor Eti 6-2 324 59 Aric Galliano 6-3 297 77 Greg Vandermade 6-3 297 77 Greg Vandermade 6-3 389 63 Trevor Hutton 6-3 308 74 Grant Calverley 6-4 296 78 Elliott Tupea 6-2 313 65 Brenen Burningham 6-7 305 65 Brenen Burningham 6-7 305 86 Patrick McNutt 6-5 255 87 Jason Stephens 6-4 220 4 Travis Cox 6-2 211 12 Matt Crivello 6-1 191 39 David Fiefia 5-8 200 7 Richard Watson 5-9 208 80 Chris Cooley 6-4 252 47 Trent Tete 5-9 222 80 Jason Thomas 6-3 208 18 Tony Pennyman 5-10 180

UI	Ali.	STATE WEFENSE			
LT	41	Justin Jackson	6-3	267	Sr.
	96	Tim Jessop	6-4	232	Fr.
NG	92	Ronald Tupea	6-2	293	Jr.
	75	Ryan DeQuillettes	6-3	278	So.
RT	90	Michael Gates	6-4	245	So.
	99	Jarom Fano	6-0	257	So.
ST	91	Nate Putnam	6-7	239	Jr.
	43	Ryan Taylor	6-4	220	So.
MLB	30	Robert Watts	6-3	224	Jr.
	51	Matt Wiser	6-0	224	So.
SLB	49	Rodney Wilson	6-2	215	Sr.
	46	Jared Johnstun	6-2	231	So.
WLB	53	Nate Fredrick	6-3	230	So.
	48	Jake Stewart	6-4	221	So.
LCB	20	Jerome Dennis	6-1	192	Jr.
	2	Mark Estelle	5-9	175	Sr.
FS	1 9	Derrek Shank	5-11	194	Sr.
	9	Terrance Washington	5-11	197	Fr.
SS	21	Mike Rosencrans	6-0	203	Sr.
		Joe Lindsay	5-11	177	Fr.
RCB	6	Marvin Clark	5-10	187	Jr.
	23	Reggie Wilson	5-10	186	So.
P	15	Ben Chaet	6-0	193	So.
	_				- CHECK

THE PAUL FELL PREDICTION



SEPTEMBER 6, 2003 AGGIES ARE IN FOR ANOTHER WARM WELCOME ON THEIR RETURN VISIT TO MEMORIAL STADIUM!

Picks

Brian Hill Editor

You might expect a letdown, after an emotional season-opener, but there also is the thought that a team, improves the most between its first and second games. It shouldn't matter against the overmatched Aggies, who lost their leading passer, leading rusher and leading receiver from a team that finished 4-7 a year ago. Not that many of Nebraska's reserves saw action against Oklahoma State, but they will this week. Nebraska 52, Utah State 12

Mike Babcock **Contributing Editor**

Though Frank Solich wouldn't appreciate this opinion, Nebraska should have a

UTAH STATE AT NEBRASKA

breather before a pair of potential pitfalls against Penn State and Southern Mississippi, at Hattiesburg. No disrespect intended, but Utah State doesn't have the manpower to survive a visit to Memorial Stadium. Nebraska 38, Utah State 10

Terry Douglass Grand Island Independent Sports Editor

With Oklahoma State in the rear view mirror and Penn State coming up, Nebraska gets a well-deserved breather against a Utah State team that Sports Illustrated ranked 117th - dead last - in the country. The Cornhuskers should play nearly everyone in uniform against the Aggies.

Nebraska 47, Utah State 13

GAME STATS



More than 800 former lettermen and coaches file onto the field as part of the Husker Nation Celebration.

NEBRASKA VS. OKLAHOMA STATE

Aug. 30, 2003 • Memorial Stadium • Lincoln, Neb.

	Sco	RE BY	Quar	TERS		
Oklahoma St.	7	0	0	0	_	7
Nebraska	3	0	14	0	_	17

SCORING

NU — Sandro DeAngelis 28yard field goal

OSU — Rashaun Woods 4yard pass from Josh Fields (Luke Phillips kick)

NU — Barrett Ruud 15-yard fumble recovery (DeAngelis kick)

NU — Judd Davies 2-yard run (DeAngelis kick)

Att. — 78,058 **Weather** — cloudy **Temp.** — 71

TEAM STATS

	OSU	NU
First Downs	11	19
Rushing	5	13
Passing	6	4
Penalty	0	2
Rushing Attempts	30	65
Yards Gained Rushing	99	299
Yards Lost Rushing	13	31
Net Yards Rushing	86	268
Net Yards Passing	97	78
Passes Attempted	28	16
Passes Completed	13	8
Had Intercepted	3	1
Total Plays	58	81
Total Net Yards	183	346
Avg. Gain Per Play	3.2	4.3
Fumbles-Lost	2-2	2-1
Penalties-Yards	8-63	9-75
Punts-Yards	5-242	5-181
Avg. Per Punt	48.4	36.2
Punt Returns-Yards	2-9	3-30
Interceptions-Yards	1-0	3-0
Fumble Returns-Yards	0-0	2-18
Kickoff Returns-Yards	3-89	1-32
Possession Time	22:12	36:48

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

NEBRASKA RUSHING

	nu	SUII	46		
Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Davis, J.	20	95	4.8	15	0
Lord, J.	18	90	5.0	27	0
Horne, D.	15	52	3.5	13	0
Davies, J.	10	33	3.3	15	1
Team	2	-2	-1.0	0	0
	PA	SSIN	IG		
Name	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD	
Lord, J.	8-16-1	50.0	78	0	
	REC	EIVI	NG		
Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Herian, M.	3	42	14.0	33	0
Pilkington, R.	2	16	8.0	11	0
Davis, J.	1	12	12.0	12	0
Liley, T.	1	5	5.0	5	0
Davies, J.	1	3	3.0	3	0

1	3	3.0	
PU	NTI	IG	
No.	Yds.	Avg.	LN
5	191	26.2	

	PUNT	RETURNS			
Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Davis, J.	3	30	10.0	17	0

	KICKOFI	FRE	TUR	NS	
Vame	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Davis, J.	1	32	32.0	32	0

DEFENSE							
Name		UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	Sacks
Washington,	F.	6	3	9	0	0	0

Williams, D.	c	1	7	1.2	0	0
Ruud, B.	2	3	5	1-1	0	0
Johnson, T.	2	3	5	0	Õ	ŏ
Pippens, J.	3	1	4	1-7	ő	1-7
Bingham, R.	1	3	4	0	0	0
Hollowell, T.	3	0	3	0	0	0
Adams, T.	1	2	3	0	0	0
Thomas, B.	1	2	3	0	0	0
Siegel, S.	2	0	2	0	0	0
Ricketts, P.	2	0	2	0	0	0
Bland, P.	1	1	2	1-3	0	0
Smith, L.	0	2	2	0	0	0
Bullocks, J.	0	2	2	0	2-0	0
Herian, M.	1	0	1	0	0	0
McPherson, L.	0	1	1	0	1-0	0
Bullocks, D.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Teamer B						

OKLAHOMA STATE

 Name
 Att.
 Yds.
 YPC
 LNG
 TD

 Bell, T.
 23
 87
 3.8
 15
 0

 Shaw, S.
 4
 8
 2.0
 3
 0

 Team
 1
 -2
 -2.0
 0
 0

 Fields, J.
 2
 -7
 -3.5
 0
 0

	PASSING					
Name Fields, J.	C-A-I 13-28-3	Pct. 46.4	Yds. 97	TD 1		

RECEIVING							
No.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD			
5	47	9.4	28	1			
3	13	4.3	9	0			
2	19	9.5	17	0			
1	8	8.0	8	0			
1	7	7.0	7	0			
1	3	3.0	3	0			
	REC No. 5 3 2 1 1	5 47 3 13	5 47 9.4 3 13 4.3 2 19 9.5 1 8 8.0 1 7 7.0	5 47 9.4 28 3 13 4.3 9 2 19 9.5 17 1 8 8.0 8 1 7 7.0 7			

	PU	NTIN	IG		
Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG	
Farden, C.	5	242	48.4	70	
P	UNT	RET	URN	S	
Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Lindsay, G.	1	5	5.0	5	0
Williams, D.	1	4	4.0	4	0
KI	CKOF	F RE	TUR	NS	
Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Morency, V.	2	61	30.5	46	0
Williams, D.	1	28	28.0	28	0

	D	EF	EN	ISE		
Name	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	Sacks
Holland, J.	5	7	12	0	1-0	0
Craig, E.	7	4	11	1-6	0	0
Pinson, L.	3	7	10	0	0	0
Richmond, G.	3	5	8	0	0	0
Duren, P.	3 3 5 3 4 1	5524223330	8	0	0	
Jones, R.	5	2	7	0	0	0
McGee, P.	3	4	7	1-1	0	0
Williams, D.	4	2	6	1-10	0	0
Wright, T.		2	633332222	0	0	0
Coe, C.	0	3	3	0	0	0
Smith, A.	0	3	3	0	0	0
Smith, K.	0	3	3	0	0	0
Williams, M.	0	0	2	0	0	0
Mowarin, E.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Carter, F.	1	1	2	1-3	0	0
Grant, V.	0	2	2	0	0	0
Jackson, G.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Farden, C.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Holland, C.	1	0	1	0	0	0
McLemore, D.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Carroll, T.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Dressen, J.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Davis, K.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Burrough, T.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Thompson, J.	0	1	1	0	Ö	0

Name Larson, K.

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WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Fatherly Advice Worked Out Well

Aspiring receiver Rodeno almost didn't return call from Nebraska assistant

By Mike Babcock

f not for his father, Tom

Rodeno would never have gone to Nebraska.

George Kelly, who recruited the Cleveland area for Bob Devaney, left a phone message for Rodeno, and he wasn't going to return the call. He planned to go to Notre Dame or

Kids from his area, a dozen or so a year, got football scholarships, and most picked Ohio State or another Big Ten school, most likely Michigan or Michigan State, if not Notre Dame.

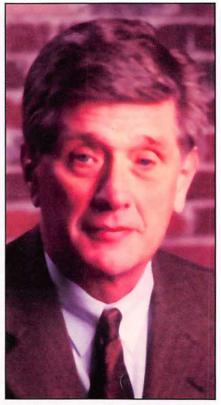
Michigan State.

Even so, Rodeno's father told him he had to call Kelly. It was common courtesy. So Rodeno made the call, ended up visiting Nebraska and decided to accept a scholarship offer there.

He would join Bob Taucher, his teammate at Cleveland's Cathedral Latin High and friend since the third grade, at Nebraska. "I loved the campus," Rodeno says, some 40 years later.

More than the campus, however, he was drawn to the Cornhusker coaches, who had a significant impact on his life, even though his career ended after two seasons and three knee surgeries.

Rodeno, an aspiring receiver, never earned a varsity letter; the 6foot-5, 275-pound Taucher would



Tom Rodeno shared a Cleveland background with Frank Solich.

earn three as an offensive tackle. Rodeno earned a bachelor of sciences degree in education, however, and learned lessons from his association with the football program that have served him well.

The "work ethic I learned there has helped me run my whole life," he says.

Fast forward to September of 2003, as Rodeno prepares to set aside the manufacturing marketing and sales business he founded more than two decades ago and move on to another venture.

He and wife Mary Jo are researching a book, "The Greatest Sports Venues in America." Frank Deford will write the introduction. And proceeds from sales will help fund Cystic Fibrosis research.

Amy Rodeno lost a battle with cystic fibrosis at age 7, dying in her father's arms, 26 years ago.

One of Amy's doctors planted the idea for what has become the book project. "Let's capture all of the great sports venues in America," he said. So that's what Rodeno is doing, state by state.

Memorial Stadium will be one of the venues representing Nebraska in the ambitious book.

Rewind to 1998, soon after Frank Solich succeeds Tom Osborne as head coach. Rodeno, Mick Ziegler, a Cornhusker letterman in the late 1960s, and Bob Sawdon begin raising money for what becomes the Frank Solich Post-Graduate Scholarship Fund.

Five scholarships have been awarded since the fund's inception. Monte Christo and Tim Johnk were the first to receive scholarships, followed by Jake McKee, Will Dabbert and Aaron Terpening.

"We could have raised that money and given it to Frank," Rodeno says. But a surprised Solich would have no part of that. More people have gotten involved and the fund has grown to the point that it can "perpetuate itself" and more than one scholarship can be awarded annually.

"It's a tribute to Frank more than

anything else," says Rodeno.

He first met Solich at Nebraska. But he was familiar with Solich long before.

When Rodeno was a sophomore, Cathedral Latin played Cleveland's Holy Name High for the city championship. Solich, a senior, led Holy Name to a 12-7 victory and the school's first title. His 50-yard touchdown run "was the play of the year," the Holy Name student newspaper reported.

Even though they were separated by two years, they shared the Cleveland background and "had a lot of mutual friends," Rodeno says. "So we became friends right away."

After finishing his degree at Nebraska, Rodeno coached with Solich for two years at Lincoln, Neb., Southeast High School, and the two have kept in touch ever since.

"I always thought Frank was a first-class guy," says Rodeno, who has lived in the Denver area the past 25 years. "The big thing is, he's there for all the right reasons, for the state, for the university, for the student-athletes. And if you know him, that's easy to understand."

Last season's record was "a little blip," he says. "I know Frank is a winner."

Part of that is the program of which they are both products, in dramatically different ways. Even though his playing career ended before it ever got started, Rodeno recalls his experiences at Nebraska with the same fondness that many of those who earned All-America recognition would.

Devaney, Osborne — his position coach - and now Solich didn't depend on a "rah-rah" approach. It was "about doing well, being prepared, execution and organization," Rodeno says, adding that success doesn't necessarily depend on having the most talented individuals.

"Nebraska has always done a great job of being a team."

As with every college freshman, "that first year is about growing up," he says. And he was no different, constantly wanting to "get out of Lincoln" because he was so homesick. But he stayed, and with the perspective of his years away, he realizes he was "lucky to graduate from there."

If he hadn't listened to his father, he wouldn't have had that opportunity.



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10/02

Huskers

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RECRUITING

Running Backs Like Huskers

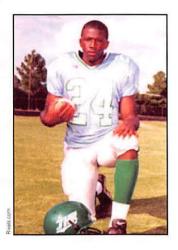
Highly regarded runners have Nebraska high on their lists

By Doug Horwich

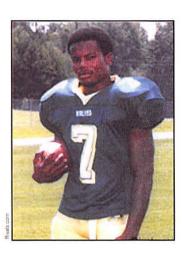
ebraska has not had a great deal of success in recent years in signing the nation's top running backs.

With an energetic young staff of recruiters, Nebraska seems poised to get back into the habit of signing one or more of the nation's top running backs on an annual basis. Coach Tim Albin's enthusiasm and energy could pay immediate dividends in attracting top national talent.

With more than five months remaining before national letter of intent day, Nebraska is in the running for a number of the nation's top running back prospects. In all likeli-



Running back prospects considering Nebraska include Andre Brown (left) of Rose High School in Greenville, N.C., and Darius Walker (right) of Buford, Ga.



hood, Nebraska will sign at least one, if not two, running backs in the 2004 class.

One of the staff's top targets is Andre Brown (6-foot-1, 215 pounds, 4.5-second 40-yard dash) from Rose High School in Greenville, N.C. Brown has a combination of speed, power and elusiveness and is hard to knock off his feet. His size gives him the ability to take the pounding that any Big 12 running back is going to face on a weekly basis.

Brown is attracting attention from

programs around the nation, and the offers continue to pile up.

"I have offers right now from Nebraska, North Carolina State, Florida State, Virginia Tech, Virginia, North Carolina, East Carolina, Duke, Notre Dame, Georgia Tech, and Maryland," he said. "I'm getting a ton of mail from all of those schools."

The Huskers are definitely in line for a visit from Brown, who already has had conversations with the man who would be coaching him.

"I recently called Coach Albin

NEBRASKA COMMITMENTS FOR 2004

Player Lance Brandenburgh Andy Christensen Allan Evridge Michael Keenan Maurice McClellan D.T. McDowell Seth Olsen

Ty Steinkuhler Nathan Swift

Hometown (school)	Ht.	Wt.	Pos.
Overland Park, Kan. (St. Thomas Aquinas)	6-1	215	LB
Bennington, Neb.	6-3	275	DT
Papillion, Neb. (Papillion-LaVista)	6-1	205	QB
Kansas City, Mo. (Oak Park)	6-2	220	LB
Pawcatuck, Conn. (Stonington)	6-3	210	Ath.
Tucker, Ga.	6-1	190	QB
Omaha, Neb. (Millard North)	6-5	300	OL
Lincoln, Neb. (Southwest)	6-3	235	DE
Hutchinson, Minn.	6-3	190	WR

from Nebraska," Brown said. "He's a pretty cool guy that is up front with you with stuff. He'll tell you how it is. He said he's not promising me anything, but if I come in and work hard, I might be able to see some playing time as a freshman."

Joining the Huskers on Brown's short list are LSU, North Carolina State, Miami and North Carolina. At least three of those programs will get official visits, and Nebraska appears to get one of them.

"One is going to Nebraska and one probably to Miami," he said. "I haven't figured out the other three yet. I'm going to take at least a few visits. If it's the right school, then I might go ahead and commit."

Another top target of the Husker staff is Darius Walker (5-11, 195, 4.45) from Buford, Ga. Walker is a superb talent who already has offers from more than 40 programs around the country. At this early point in the recruiting process, he has narrowed his choices to a group of 11 schools: Notre Dame, Nebraska, Stanford, USC, Maryland, State, Michigan, Florida, LSU, Georgia Tech and Arkansas.

The good news for Nebraska is that the Huskers are one of only two schools that are being mentioned for a definite visit thus far, along with Notre Dame. As it turns out, the Georgia native grew up watching the great Husker teams of the 1990s.

"They are my childhood favorite school." Walker said Nebraska. "I loved the running backs they had when Ahman Green was there and the way they played. They were a real powerhouse. Their offensive line was always great then, too. I just loved to watch them. That was my childhood dream.

"I couldn't complete my college visits without going down and checking them out. I owe it to myself to check them out."

Walker is looking for a wellrounded program that can satisfy him both athletically and academically.

"I'm looking for a school that has great balance between academics and athletics, and that's not too onesided either way," he said. "Also, the environment and coaching staff are important. I'd like to play early and would not like to redshirt. I've been

RECRUITING NOTES

Top Prospects Rank NU Highly

By Rick Shaw

ebraska coaches have shown a lot of determination on the recruiting trail heading into the fall. The following provides a glimpse at four highly regarded high school football players who have Nebraska at or near the top of their lists heading into September.

Andre Brown, running back, 6-foot-1, 210 pounds, Greenville (Rose), N.C. — With excellent size and speed (4.4-second 40-yard dash), Brown has the athletic resume to make an immediate impact for many of the nation's college football powers. Brown, who is regarded as the nation's 12th best prospect at running back by Rivals.com, has offers from North Carolina State, Florida State, Virginia Tech, Virginia, North Carolina, East Carolina, Duke, Notre Dame, Georgia Tech and Maryland, in addition to the Cornhuskers. Brown rushed for more than 2,200 yards and scored 17 touchdowns as a junior in 2002. He lists Nebraska and North Carolina State tied for the top spot on his list.

"I like Nebraska because of the tradition of their running backs," Brown said. "Their running game that they have is great. You haven't heard of a big time running back there though since Lawrence Phillips and Ahman Green. It would be fun to go to Nebraska and restore that tradition."

Chris Bowers, defensive end, 6-3, 240, Shreveport (Evangel), La. — Some recruiting analysts regard Bowers as the top player in Louisiana heading into the 2003 season. Rivals.com lists Bowers among the top 12 defensive end prospects. Boasting a 4.7 40 time and a 355-pound bench press, Bowers has been extremely productive from his defensive end spot over the past couple of seasons. The Louisiana blue-chipper tallied 25 sacks as a sophomore and 18 more as a junior. Bowers, who currently claims 15 scholarship offers, already has scheduled a trip to Lincoln for the Kansas State game in November and lists Nebraska prominently among his favorites.

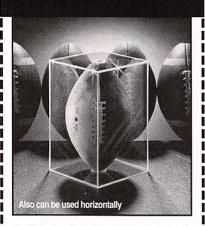
"I talked to Coach (Jeff) Jamrog last week actually," Bowers said. "I got a chance to get to know him. I like their tradition. It's big-time foot-

Grayson Gunheim, defensive end, 6-6, 240, Sebastopol (Analy), Calif. — Gunheim may be the fastest rising prospect in the West, with offers from all of the schools in the Pac-10, as well as Colorado and Nebraska. With 4.49 speed in the 40, a 36-inch vertical jump and a 325-pound bench press, it's easy to see why this pass rushing specialist is demanding so much attention. Gunheim lists Nebraska as his early leader and hopes to visit Lincoln sometime this fall.

Shae Reagan, athlete, 6-3, 245, Idalou, Texas — Reagan is big and athletic enough to play a number of positions on the football field in college. However, he has professed a desire to begin his college experience at quarterback. Reagan rushed for 1,355 yards (22 touchdowns) and passed for 1,081 yards (12 touchdowns) as a junior.

"My top five is Nebraska, TCU, Texas A&M, Oklahoma State and Texas Tech," Reagan said. "I'll most likely make those my five official visits this fall."





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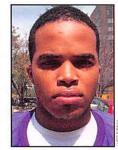


reading the media guides and looking at the depth charts of schools, but I guess it's hard to say where I'd have the best chance for early playing time until I watch the games this season."

Despite scouring the country for running back talent, the Husker staff also has an eye on the top in-state talent this year, and Brandon Gunn

(5-11, 190, 4.5) from Omaha Central High School already has received a written offer.

Gunn is being recruited nationally by a number of top programs and is one of multiple



Brandon Gunn

Division I prospects at Central this year.

"I have offers from Nebraska, UCLA, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Kansas State, Iowa State and Wyoming," he said. "Everybody is sending me quite a bit of mail. I get at least one letter per day from each school and sometimes two."

Although he already has plans to visit UCLA and Colorado on official visits, Gunn may not visit Nebraska officially because he will be able to take unlimited unofficial visits to Lincoln.

"I'll be down at the first Nebraska game on Aug. 30," Gunn said. "I'll probably go to a few of their home games. I'm supposed to take an unofficial visit down there before that first game, too, because I haven't gotten a chance to meet all of the coaches yet. I still might take an official visit down there, too. I'm not sure yet. I've already seen them a lot."

Gunn likes the Husker program but also is open to going to school out-of-state.

"I really don't have a top five right now," he said, "but I'm not putting Nebraska out of the picture. I know a lot about them, and they are only 45 minutes away. I want to find out more about some of the other schools, too."

Gunn is one of the top prospects in Nebraska, and the Husker staff definitely has a vested interest in keeping the pipeline to Central High School flowing into Lincoln.

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VOLLEYBALL

A Set Plan

Lynch is ready, but two-setter formula would be fine with her

By Todd Henrichs

ichelle Lynch has to live up to some pretty big expectations as a first-year starting setter at

Nebraska.

The Huskers' volleyball program has produced an All-America setter eight out of nine seasons since 1994. The only year there wasn't an All-American running the show was 1999, a season when Nebraska used a two-setter tandem of Jill McWilliams and freshman Lindsay Wischmeier.

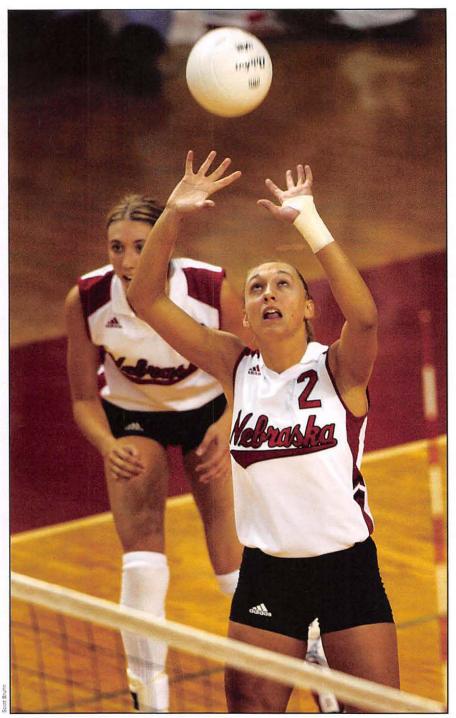
Head coach John Cook would like to utilize a two-setter system again this year, not to take any of the heat off Lynch, but to take advantage of as many of the talented players in the NU program as is possible.

If everything goes as Cook plans, the two-setter lineup should give Lynch and freshman cohort Dani Busboom the best chance to direct a multi-pronged offensive attack this year.

And even though she's waited two years behind Greichaly Cepero for her chance to run the team, Lynch said the two-setter formula is fine with her.

"Obviously a new system means being open minded and just working hard to adjust," Lynch said. "But the team is so diverse, and we have so many options and so many great players that whatever is going to be best for the team and whatever is going to take us the furthest is what we're going to go with."

Two years in the background is a long time for anyone who was the star of her high school team. Lynch was a highly touted recruit out of



Sophomore Michelle Lynch has waited two years behind All-America setter Greichaly Cepero.

Jacksonville, Ill. She made the coveted Volleyball Magazine Fab 50 her senior year of high school and was consid-

ered one of the top five setters in the country.

With its rich history of setters -

the All-America role includes Cathy Noth, Tisha Delaney, Lori Endicott, Val Novak, Christy Johnson, Fiona Nepo and Cepero — Nebraska was the natural college choice for someone of Lynch's ability. Even NU's media guide touts the school as "Setter University."

Lynch spent her first year at Nebraska as a redshirt and played last season primarily as a serving specialist. All the while, Lynch was able to learn plenty watching Cepero lead the Huskers.

Although very different players — Lynch, at 5-foot-11, is smaller and attacks left-handed - Lynch picked up on some of the mental things like the way Cepero set up hitters and found ways to battle through tough situations.

"She just was such a strong player and never showed weakness," Lynch said. "Her body language was always businesslike."

Lynch, too, should benefit from Charlene Tagaloa's addition to the coaching staff. Tagaloa was a twotime All-American as a setter at Brigham Young and spent four years with the U.S. National Team. She's played and coached in the profession-





Freshman Dani Busboom (left) is Nebraska's second setter. New assistant coach Charlene Tagaloa (right) was a twotime All-America setter at BYU.

al ranks.

Lynch, in turn, is helping to tutor Busboom. They got together a few times this summer, Lynch said, to go over the finer points of every Nebraska hitter and to discuss the Huskers' system.

"I feel older," Lynch said. "That sounds kind of funny, but I'm one of the veterans and able to help others out. I remember when I was a freshman and what I needed."

Lynch admitted feeling a little strange when she began working with the top unit in practice last spring. And despite playing with the pain of a bulged disc in her back,

Lynch's steady play has been an encouraging sign to Cook, who hopes Nebraska's offense can change drivers without missing a gear this sea-

As for her teammates, Lynch could count on their respect even before entering the season. Unlike Cepero, Lynch sets what Cook and the Huskers call a "hitter's ball."

"That's been our focus with Michelle," Cook said. "Things like putting up hittable balls and understanding how to run the offense and being a leader at the setter position."

NU senior co-captain Anna Schrad came away with an even greater appreciation for Lynch after training alongside some of the top setters in the country at the U.S. National Team's A-2 program last month in Lake Placid, N.Y.

Whether NU's system relies on one setter or both, Lynch says it's that kind of teamwork that will keep the Huskers near the top of the college

"I know that there's a lot of hard work ahead," Lynch said. "It's a new team but I'm just fortunate enough to have great teammates that make the transition so much easier."





Getting Defensive

Senior defender Harms sets the standard for young Huskers

By Mark Derowitsch

hristy Harms has been set free to a degree this season.

No, the Nebraska soccer team won't let its senior defender run with reckless abandon all over the field. The Huskers have a defensive system in place, and Coach John Walker still expects Harms to move around as smoothly as possible.

This year, Harms won't be hauling around on her left hand a bulky cast, which she toted for much of last season. Harms grew so accustomed to the cast that she gave it a name.

Rex.

"Rex" did its job. Harms' index finger is totally healed, so she won't be carrying around any visitors this year.

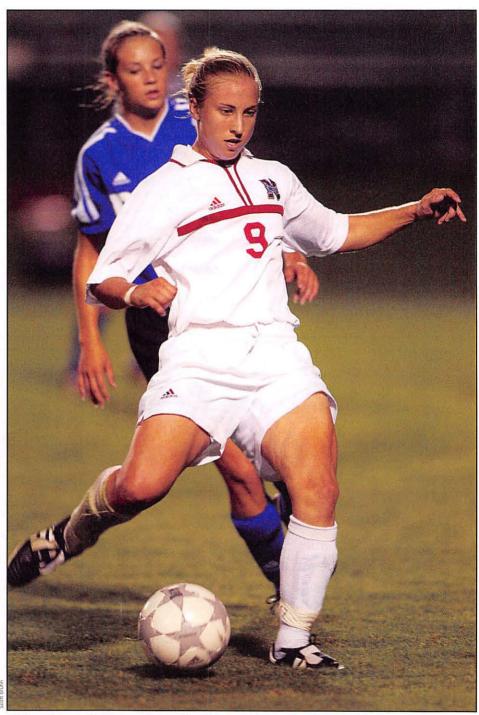
"I can't bend it all the way, but it's still there," Harms said, talking about her repaired finger and not the aforementioned cast, of which Harms and the rest of the team grew attached to.

"I'm healthy. I'm ready to go."

Not that "Rex" slowed Harms down much. You can make an argument that Harms played her best soccer at the end of the season, cast and all.

By the end of the season, when the Huskers were playing their best soccer, Harms was spearheading a defense that was shutting down opponent after opponent. During the final 13 games, Nebraska gave up a total of seven goals and shut out nine opponents. Two shutouts came in the NCAA Tournament.

All that happened after Nebraska dropped back-to-back games to Texas



Christy Harms, the only senior on the Nebraska squad, was the Big 12 Conference Defensive MVP in 2002.

and Texas A&M to fall to 5-4-3. After that, the Huskers won 11 of their final 13 games and advanced to the third

round of the NCAA Tournament, the seventh straight season they reached the sweet 16 round.

Because Nebraska lost so much firepower up front, including Christine Latham, the school's alltime leading scorer, look for the Huskers to pick up where they left off last season with defense.

Nikki Baker is Nebraska's top returning scorer, having scored nine goals last season.

"Last year, we stepped up and came together really well, especially at the end of the season," Harms said. "Things really clicked for us, and we carried that into the spring, then we carried that into the fall. You make the standards and set the standards back there.

"I wouldn't say we're going to rely on the defense from the beginning, but that's where it all starts. You can't have breakdowns back there and expect to win."

Don't worry. The Huskers still have plenty of talented players up

At least on the roster.

Harms is Nebraska's lone senior, and the squad features nine freshmen.

Forward Ashley Carter and forward/midfielder Jessie Bruch have made the biggest impact so far, but Walker is counting on most of Nebraska's new faces to contribute this season

And if the Huskers have to lean on the defensive ability of a player like Harms, so be it.

"It's going to be a better system in that our forwards have to do things right," Harms said. "We don't have that big standout up front, so they have to mesh together and play smart. It starts from the back, and it goes up from there."

Nebraska picked up its defensive pressure after losing back-to-back games midway through last season, and early 10 months later, Walker can look back and see the positives.

"It was a valuable experience for us," he said. "We were such a young group - remember we started five freshmen at some point during the year — that it was important for them to go through a few growing pains in order for them to really understand what they needed to do at the end of the season.

"If we had a couple of those games where we scraped by and got the result and not played well, I'm not sure we would have had that kind of success at the end of the season."

The Huskers have to deal with

adversity of another sort to begin this season, and this should make the team stronger, too.

Nebraska started the season without a full complement of players. Two of the most heralded freshmen, midfielder Brittany Timko and forward/defender Tanya Dennis, will miss time while they train with the Canadian World Cup team.

The injury bug also has hit the Husker camp. Sophomore midfielder Pam Karakusis is battling an inner ear disorder, defender Katie Bunkers recently had arthroscopic knee surgery, forward Kari Hogan is out with a broken nose, while Carter and Bruch have been dealing with nagging leg injuries.

Walker doesn't seem to mind, though.

"The way I look at it, we have a good, strong team, but we're just not going to have everybody here at the beginning," Walker said. "That's all there is to it."

Said Harms: "Once we get everybody, that will just make us stronger. It will be a big boost for us because we'll be adding to our talents, to our strengths.

"It will just make us better."



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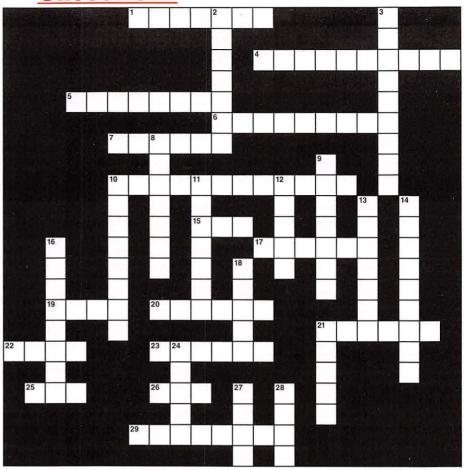
ACROSS

- 1 1997 Lombardi Award winner
- 4 Big 12 championship game location
- 5 NU's radio network
- 6 Two-time Outland Trophy winner
- 7 Utah State nickname
- 10 NU's indoor practice facility
- 15 Barrett Ruud's father
- 17 NU's punter
- 19 NU's No. 5 (offense)
- 20 NU's No. 5 (defense)
- 21 1997 Outland Trophy winner
- 22 Ryon Bingham's home state
- 23 NU's Nov. 8 opponent
- 25 Network for NU-Utah State telecast
- 26 Network for NU-Penn State telecast
- 29 NU head coach before Devaney

DOWN

- 2 NU's first Heisman Trophy winner
- 3 NU's preseason All-Big 12 selection
- 8 Le Kevin Smith's home state
- 9 NU defensive end, captain
- 10 Jake Andersen's home state
- 11 Penn State head coach
- 12 Utah State campus location
- 13 Utah State head coach
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- 21 NU's Nov. 1 opponent
- 24 NU's running backs coach
- 27 Josh Davis' father
- 28 NU's play-by-play announcer

Answers in Sept. 13 issue



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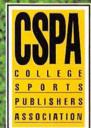
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The Right Spot

Weakside Ilinebacker Williams more comfortable in new defensive system



Mike BABCOCK

THE OFFICIAL STATISTICS credited Demorrio Williams with seven tackles, which has a certain symmetry given the fact that he also wears a No. 7 jersey.

But seven tackles are a poor indication of the impact the senior weakside linebacker had in Nebraska's 17-7 opening victory against Oklahoma State.

Williams was omnipresent. "That left tackle is going to be seeing him in his

sleep for a while, I think," Cornhusker defensive coordinator Bo Pelini said.

"He really set the tone for us rush-wise."

Oklahoma State's starting left tackle was Matt Hardison, a 6-foot-5, 295-pound senior whose job it was

to keep Nebraska's right defensive end from being a nuisance to his quarterback, Josh Fields. Williams was that end in the "nickel" package.

And Hardison endured some frustration in dealing with him.

Utilizing the 6-1, 215-pound Williams at defensive end was a recent Pelini adjustment.

"Demorrio, he's got the ability to get off the ball," said middle linebacker Barrett Ruud. "He's got a really good start. That's all pass rushing is."

Without getting off the ball quickly, of course, Williams couldn't give away 80 pounds to a blocker and expect to be anything but, well, squashed.

But then, Pelini knew that, and more than once Williams was in the right place at the right time, creating a problem even when he wasn't credited with a tackle. That was the case on what might well have been his biggest play, a turning point if you will.

Late in the first quarter, on its second offensive series, Oklahoma State lined up third-and-9 at the Nebraska 43-yard line. The Cowboys had converted three third downs on a nine-play, 52-yard touchdown drive on their first series to take a 7-3 lead, and it appeared they might convert on another when Fields dropped back to pass.

Fields might have teamed with All-America wide receiver Rashaun Woods for a first down, or even a touchdown, if it hadn't been for Williams' pressure. Fields was knocked off balance as he released the ball, which sailed just out of Woods' reach.

An Oklahoma State touchdown on that series might have provided the momentum shift that Ruud's 15-yard fumble return for a touchdown did later.

Williams apparently wasn't all that comfortable in the previous system. "I feel a lot better about it," he said of Pelini's defense during two-a-day practices.

The coaches are "putting the backers in a lot of situa-

tions to make a lot of plays," he said. "I just like the fact he keeps the Will linebackers kind of covered up."

In simple terms, "covered up" means the defensive linemen tie up blockers, allowing the linebackers to make the plays. Williams made a lot of plays last season, leading the team in tackles. But he alternated with T.J. Hollowell, who has been moved to the Buck linebacker position. Neither had to alternate against Oklahoma State.

A year ago, "I didn't feel like people, some of the staff members, really had confidence in me that I could do it," Williams said. "The situation is, you've got two guys in the same position, wanting to be on the field at the same time. You're kind of going through that type of stuff, so it was a struggle last year."

> Pelini's confidence in Williams is obvious. "He's a special player," said Pelini. "He has special talents. We used him in a variety of ways. He was asked to do a lot of different things, and he responded well. He had a heck of a football game."

> Williams isn't the only player more comfortable in the new system. "I feel like every-body was working together," he said. "I didn't see anybody pointing fingers when we couldn't get it going. I feel like we were coached very well."

That meant being "put in the right spots to make some plays," he said.

Pelini and the other defensive coaches needed some imagination to see him lining up at an end. "They just kind of started that, especially

in the nickel package," Williams said. "They want to put a lot of guys out there that can run pretty well."

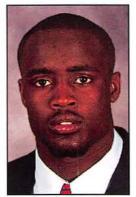
The Cornhuskers had some defensive problems in the third quarter of games last season. At Oklahoma State, for example, a 7-3 halftime lead dissolved into a 17-7 deficit by the end of the third quarter in what would be a 24-21 loss. They gave up 20 points to Penn State in the third quarter, and 14 to both Texas and Colorado.

"We said the first series of the second half was the most important of the game," Ruud said. But the defense didn't make many adjustments at halftime.

Pelini told them to "just keep doing what we need to do, stay focused on your job, don't concern yourselves with things you can't control," he said. "We talked about it as a group at halftime, no mumbling needs to go on, just keep doing your thing, over and over and over, keep your focus and good things will happen."

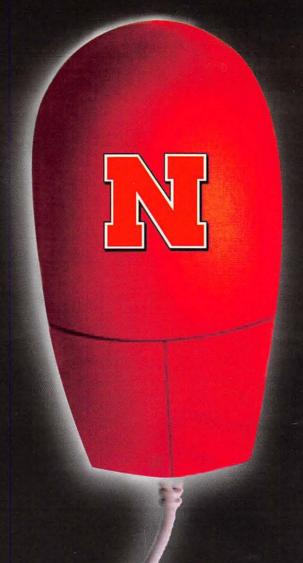
Cornerback Fabian Washington, who led Nebraska with nine tackles, summed it up. "Coach told us to keep our heads up, play Nebraska football," he said.

The result? "Let everybody know the Blackshirts are back," Washington said. ■



Demorrio Williams led the Huskers in tackles as a junior.

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